

**Statement to Trinity Baptist Church
Made by Pastor Tom Messer on Sunday Evening, October 1, 2006**

As I promised earlier, I am updating you on the situation with Dr. Gray. One of the most difficult challenges in this matter for me has been the limitation of our ability to communicate directly with those hurt by Dr. Gray because of a specific request by the State Attorney's Office that we have no interaction with them while criminal charges remain pending. Still, our hearts and prayers go out to them and anyone hurt by this situation.

That being said, we have received a preliminary verbal report from the independent investigators. More than 40 interviews of church leadership, current and former church members and staff, and family members of those believed to have been wronged by Dr. Gray have been conducted. Our attorneys have found no indication of a cover-up, either deliberate or unintentional. I mention this because of rumors that have circulated that have accused me and or church leadership of not acting ethically or legally on the information that was available to us.

So that there is no misunderstanding, in addressing the situation, I included church leadership and sought legal advice so that our actions fulfilled our legal obligations while remaining consistent with Biblical principles. The entire matter was treated prayerfully. God knows that I have beat myself up second guessing things I might have done differently. I can tell you that I and the entire deacon board have tried to do what was right given the information we had at the time. The news reports and the criminal charges contain more information and far more serious allegations than we had prior to Dr. Gray's arrest.

Still, I realize, and as the report has found, that despite our best efforts, things could have been done differently and we continue to evaluate all of our actions. Accordingly, I want to encourage anyone who believes they have factual information relevant to this issue to please let us know so that they can be interviewed.

I want you to anticipate that the media will run additional stories regarding this situation. If that happens let me tell you how I will continue to respond criticism levied against me and the church. As I shared in a recent sermon that when David was cursed by Shimei, he responded and said, "Let him alone, and let him curse; the Lord had bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." I want to be sure that we all respond spiritually in this matter. We only want the truth to be known and will withhold judgment until this matter is concluded.

Finally, there are several misperceptions that I need to correct regarding the church's relationship with Dr. Gray. First, the church has not and is not paying for Dr. Gray's legal fees. Second, the church does provide housing for Dr. Gray based on an agreement that was made in 1986. Third, prior to his arrest we made the decision to move Dr. Gray to a different home based on what was best for the preservation of church assets. Last, all financial support for Dr. Gray's missionary activities ceased when he resigned as a missionary.

As we move forward, we anticipate that we will continue to strengthen our policies and practices whenever necessary to ensure that children are provided with a safe environment and we maintain a clear process to address any potential future allegations.